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I've often wondered what the population of the Agency looked like (laughter), and I think this is the first time I've ever seen it. I obviously have to say this is a very heart-warming turn-out, and I appreciate very much your all coming. I will not keep you long. I've simply come to say "hail and farewell." And sometimes even when you do that, you can outsmart yourself.

[Redacted]

high government office, I said hail and farewell to him in Latin, and the only answer I got back was, "What did you say?" (Laughter.) I'm not going to attempt that today. Anyway, I've learned my lesson.

I simply want to say as I take my departure, and this is not literally my departure in a physical sense -- I'm going to be around for the next week or ten days trying to clean up a few things -- but it is my departure from you. As you know, Dr. Schlesinger was sworn in this morning, so I am no longer the Director. I think this a fitting occasion therefore to try and say goodbye to you all, all at once. As we've worked together these years, I think that it must have occurred to most of you that we're an uncommon lot. In most places individuals are constantly looking elsewhere for jobs, for employment, for interests, on the old theory that the grass is greener on the other side of the street. The grass outside of this Agency may be green but it's not greener. You can all stand tall to be working here. You can stand tall because it's a highly intelligent, highly motivated, highly disciplined, loyal organization. In all the years that I've been Director I've never been let down by any one of you. And that's a mouthful!

I was reminded of a story that I heard years ago. It's probably familiar to all of you but it's an amusing one and it points up something I want to mention. A traveling salesman was driving about two o'clock in the morning through a torrential rain out in the countryside -- a rain much as we had here today -- and suddenly he got a flat tire. When he got out to examine his circumstances, he found that he was on a bridge over a roaring stream. Also he knew that the last town he had left was some distance back and that the one down the pike was at least ten miles away. So he saw nothing for it except to try and repair his tire.

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He got himself down as best he could and pulled the hubcap off and left it on the stone edge of the bridge very carefully where he could find it with his little flashlight. And then he got painstakingly down and took the lugs off the wheel that had the flat tire and carefully put the lugs into the container, the hubcap. Then he got down again. And for all of you who have changed tires, and most of you have at one time or another, you know about that last wrenching pull to get that tire off the car. Well he gave it the wrenching pull all right. It came off. But in the process his elbow hit the hubcap and into the roaring stream it went. Well he just didn't know what in the world he was going to do at that point. And he looked up and suddenly noticed there was a fence nearby and behind the fence was a little figure gazing out at him in the pouring rain. And he looked over at this little man and he said, "What do you think I ought to do?" And the little man said, "Well, I'll tell you -- I'll make a suggestion to you." He said, "You go and take one lug off each of the other three wheels and put them on that fourth wheel, and that will get you to the next town." And the salesman thought about this a moment -- the light flashed, obviously -- and suddenly he looked at the little man and said, "Isn't that an insane asylum up there?" And the little fellow said, "Yes." He said, "Well aren't you one of the inmates?" The little man said, "Yes. I may be crazy but I don't have to be stupid." (Laughter.)

I know a lot of people think you're crazy to work in the Agency. That's what you hear from our detractors, that's what you hear from people abroad. They wonder what we do. It's an arcane society, and they're troubled, and they think you're really not quite with it to be here. I want to say, on the contrary, there's not a stupid person in this organization even though many people may think you're crazy. (Laughter.)

In closing, I want to thank all of you who've written me notes, and sent me messages of goodwill and good luck. I can't thank you all personally; I can't write notes to you all very well, but accept this as my thanks, please. And please know, as I leave, that I'm very proud of you all and very proud of what the Agency has done. Thank you. (Applause.)

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